AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (original): A heat fusible conjugate fiber produced by high-speed melt spinning, which comprises a first resin component having an orientation index of 40% or higher and a second resin component having a lower melting or softening point than the melting point of the first resin component and an orientation index of 25% or lower, the second resin component being present on at least part of the surface of the fiber in a lengthwise continuous configuration.

Claim 2 (original): The heat fusible conjugate fiber according to claim 1, having a heat shrinkage of 5% or less at a temperature higher than the melting point or softening point of the second resin component by 10°C.

Claim 3 (original): The heat fusible conjugate fiber according to claim 1 or 2, which is produced by a process including, after the spinning, a heat treatment or a crimp treatment but no drawing.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The heat fusible conjugate fiber according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, having a sheath-core configuration in which the first resin component makes the core, and the second resin component makes the sheath.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The heat fusible conjugate fiber according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, wherein the first resin component comprises polypropylene, and the second resin component comprises high-density polyethylene.

Claim 6 (original): A nonwoven fabric produced by providing a carded web comprising the heat fusible conjugate fiber according to claim 1 and heat fusing the intersections of the fibers constituting the web.

Claim 7 (original): A bulky nonwoven fabric comprising heat fusible conjugate fibers comprising two components having different melting points, formed by heat fusing the

intersections of the fibers, and having a specific volume of 95 cm^3/g or more, a strength per basis weight of 0.18 (N/25 mm)/(g/m^2) or higher, and a bulk softness per unit thickness of 0.14 N/mm or less.

Claim 8 (original): The bulky nonwoven fabric according to claim 7, which is produced by providing a carded web and heat fusing the intersections of the fibers in the web by blowing hot air.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The bulky nonwoven fabric according to claim 7 or 8, wherein the heat fusible conjugate fiber is the heat fusible conjugate fiber ~~according to claim 1~~ produced by high-speed melt spinning, which comprises a first resin component having an orientation index of 40% or higher and a second resin component having a lower melting or softening point than the melting point of the first resin component and an orientation index of 25% or lower, the second resin component being present on at least part of the surface of the fiber in a lengthwise continuous configuration.